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241 462 626 183 461 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the authors have heard men admonish a woman for interruption with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laughter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 593 183 626 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conventional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within the farm family. The connection between family status and labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the noneconomic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 593 561 Within the framework of the division of labor on the basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

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his relationship to his fellows within the group. The controls exercised among members in work and in the life of the family in general show themselves a constant pattern to be observed from farm to farm wherever one elects to examine the daily and annual rounds of activity.

Thus in any of the tasks which the group must perform in its economy, the division of labor between the adult farmer-father and his sons may be observed. The father is owner and director of the enterprise; in him the farm and its income are vested; in the community it is known as his and the sons are spoken of as his "boys." Thus in the draining of a field or the sale of cattle in a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye and refer necessary decisions to him.

Perhaps the best method of illustrating this relationship is to present it from the point of view of the growing individual who takes his place in the farm family. He forms part of the productive unit which is his own family. The techniques of farming are passed on to him, and he learns them under the direction of his father, uncles, and brothers. At their hands he acquires the conditioning which will fit him to form a farm family of his own, thus to continue the traditional pattern. Naturally, his conditioning is more than merely technological; he gets on the farm the full training which makes him a member of his class and time.

The growing child ordinarily sees his father as owner and principal worker of the farm. When the whole family group of father, mother, children, and whatever other relatives may be living with them, works in concert, as at the potato planting, the turf cutting, and the haymaking, it is the father who directs the group's activities, himself doing the heavy tasks. The father looks after and takes care of the cattle, delegating minor tasks connected with them to his sons. Even though the cattle may be generally discussed by

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462 561 593 868 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them, drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly, or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 593 868 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country. He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns, as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value the techniques which he acquires.

462 593 868 626 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyone in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important, many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

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direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

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If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

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For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

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Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

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Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

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itself in household arrangement and in the grouping of individuals in other spheres than farm work.

This parental dominance continues as long as the father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the sons, they have no control of the direction of farm activities nor of the disposal of farm income. They go to market and fair from the time they are twelve years old, but they buy or sell little, if anything, for themselves. Thus the small farmer and his sons are often seen at the fairs and markets together, but it is the farmer-father who does the bargaining. Once when one of the authors asked a countryman about this at a potato market, he explained that he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son "isn't well known yet and isn't a good hand at selling." If the son wants a half crown to go to a hurley match or to take a drink on market day with friends, he must get it from his father. The authors have seen many sons, fully adult, come into shops to buy some farm requirement, such as a bag of meal, and say that the "old fellow" will pay for it. And a few days later the old fellow arrives to pay for the goods "my young fellow got." The son may, of course, earn money in employment off the farm, as many do at work on the roads in occasional employment with governmental bodies or large farmers. But in this case he is expected to contribute the larger part of the money to the general household expenses as long as he remains on the farm.

The procedure of the Land Commission, a government body, in providing additions to small holdings from the break-up of large estates illustrates well this retention of parental authority. It is the policy of the Commission to employ local men as much as possible in the reclamation and fencing work necessary at the division of an estate; the owners of the holdings to be enlarged are entitled to the work. Consequently, when the work is given, the farmer owners are assigned it. But it is the sons who do the work,

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and at the pay-off the "old fellows" walk sometimes many miles to be paid the wages their sons have earned. In one case of land division which the authors witnessed, a Land Commission official walked about the estate pointing out the plots which the selected farmers were to get. The farmers followed in a body at a respectful distance, each ready to step forward when his name was called. Behind them came all the young men of the neighborhood, the farmers' sons. When it was necessary to send someone back to a farmhouse or to cut up stakes to mark boundaries, the orders were transmitted from the official to the farmer and from the farmer to his sons, though these were in the majority of cases adult men. Likewise in country post offices, even after the farm has been made over to the son and the "old people" have the old-age pension, it is the son who comes to collect it for them.

Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman remains a "boy" in respect to farm work and in the rural vocabulary. A deputy to the *Dáil* (the Irish parliament) raised a considerable laugh in 1933, which echoed into the daily newspapers, when he inadvertently dropped into the country idiom and pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older" who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their fathers' farms. Likewise, a countryman, complaining to one of the authors about his position, said: "You can be a boy here forever as long as the old fellow is still alive."

It goes without saying that the father exercises his control over the whole activity of the "boy." It is by no means confined to their work together. Indeed, the father is the court of last resort, which dispenses punishment for deviations from the norm of conduct in all spheres. Within the bounds of custom and law he has full power to exercise discipline. Corporal punishment is not a thing of the past in

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Ireland, and, especially in the intermediate stages of the child's development, from seven to puberty, it gets full play.

It is during those years that the characteristic relationship between father and son is developed in rural communities. The son has suffered a remove from the previous almost exclusive control of its mother, in which an affective content of sympathy and indulgence was predominant, and is brought into contact for the first time with the father and older men. But the transfer is not completed. There is a hiatus in his development through the years of school when his participation in men's work and his relationship with his father has little chance of developing into an effective partnership. A real union of interests does not take place until after Confirmation and school-leaving, when for the first time his exclusive contacts and his entire day-to-day activity, particularly in farm work, will be with his father and the older men.

This fact colors greatly the relationship of father and son, as far as affective content goes. There is none of the close companionship and intimate sympathy which characterizes, at least ideally, the relationship in other groups. Where such exists, it is a matter for surprised comment to the small farmers. In its place there is developed, necessarily perhaps, a marked respect, expressing itself in the tabooing of many actions, such as smoking, drinking, and physical contact of any sort, which can be readily observed in any small farm family. Coupled with this is the lifelong subordination the retention of the name "boy" implies, which is never relaxed even in the one sphere in which farmer father and son can develop an intense community of interest — farm work. Nothing prevents the development of great mutual pride, the boy in his experienced and skillful mentor, tutor, and captain in work, and the man in a worthy and skillful successor and fellow workman, but on the other hand everything within the behavior developed in the rela-

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593 tionship militates against the growth of close mutual sym-
[578] pathy. As a result, the antagonisms inherent in such a situation often break through very strongly when conflicts arise.

The division of labor in the masculine sphere between father and sons, then, is more than an arrangement in farm management. It is very directly part of the systems of controls, duties, and sentiments which make up the whole family life. The apprenticeship and the long subordination of the sons in farm work are reflections of the entirety of their relationship to parents; it is impossible to treat the two spheres of behavior separately.

Similarly, the relationships in farm work between the other members of the household cannot be treated separately.

593 On the other hand, the relationship of mother and son
● 561 has a very different content. Like that between father and
562 son, it is the product of years of development. It is marked, too, by a similar retention of subordinate status on the part of the son. In farm work the boy is subject to commands of his mother even when, fully adult, he has passed over exclusively to men's work. It is for this reason that many Irish farm widows with grown sons can successfully manage a farm for many years before they ultimately make it over upon a son's marriage, and from their restricted scope within the household and haggard effectively direct operations in the masculine sphere. In such cases, the woman retains control. Even in such an important matter as her son's eventual marriage she has a very dominant voice.

But within the scope of such a subordination there is a
593 quite different affective history. The relationship is the first and earliest into which a child enters. It is very close, intimate, and all-embracing for the first years of life; only gradually does the experience of the child expand to include brothers, sisters, and, last, the older male members of the household.

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592 888 His shifting the topic from help to alignments within the family is entirely unconscious; it could not better illustrate the connection between work roles and reciprocal interaction in the family.

If there was a squabble between the mother and daughter, the old woman would more than likely stand up for the daughter. She would teach her how to do things and would have more patience than the father.

592 888 589 Quite as before in the case of the farm economy, the strength of the pattern reveals itself in the aberrant cases. Where there is no old couple to take up new status and position in the family group, others within the family of the older generation or even of the same may be forced into such a position.

Two cases came under the particular notice of the authors. In one an elder sister became to all intents and purposes the "old woman" in the house. A widow, she owned the farm, was in the "west room," and had the place at the hob. Her younger sister and her husband, who had married into the farm, managed the farm and knew that their children would inherit it. The elder sister helped a bit with the household, but spent much of her time before the fire. Both the man and woman of the house referred to her as "the old woman," a term of respect, and one of the authors, who lived in the house for a time, learned only after much intimacy the half-forgotten fact that she was not mother but sister to the younger woman. In the other case it was a father's sister who took up the role, the product of long substitution for a lost mother, and at the match the writings made provision for her.

888 ● 561 Intimately connected with the transition at marriage are all the phenomena of age grading so marked in Irish country life. The old couple advance one step in their course through life; they enter a new age grade.

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those differentiations of status which are given formal and explicit recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily remarked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit behind them round the room on other chairs or on the window seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the principal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrangement shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving the center of the stage to the old men, and the children stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

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561 571 794 When the whole population of a country district is on the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially noteworthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 571 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such behavior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] 342 If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9. The houses of the small farmers show a remarkable uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

[565] 1 [see p. 34. -Analyst]

592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying
512 the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

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They occupy this place and receive this respect from other persons than their relatives.[1] This respect is as much folk custom as the norms of family life. The community can on occasion enforce it upon the family members through gossip, verbal censure, and, more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest. 888 626

The vocabulary of the countryman and a great many of the judgments and comments he makes upon his surroundings express the valuations of the community upon age. In the discussion of the house interior it was remarked that the conducts of the different age groups were too "natural" to the farmers to evoke verbal recognition among them. The statement is true only in a sense. The farmers make no explicit recognition of the organization of behavior upon the basis of age. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. 888 561

More cogent, perhaps, for our understanding are the many expressions which arise from day to day based upon the speaker's place within an age grade. A great part of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the friends and neighbors who pass their lives within a rural community takes its form so. Particularly is this true of discussion of the past, a favorite topic and one which came very frequently indeed to the authors' ears. Gossip and personalities are as frequent a theme, and a speaker rarely fails to qualify the object of his remarks with an appropriate definition of his relative age. Even to intimates a man is referred to as "old John" or "young Michael." 888 561 521

Perhaps it is the discussion of the past which illustrates best partiality for the things of one's own age. The older men and women describe the "old days" with enthusiasm and regret. The "old times" are a ready topic among the country people, or rather among the older ones. Many an evening an old person can be got to tell of the "old times." 888 521

[1] [i.e., the aged. – Analyst]

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the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work. 888 521

Yet they were later forced to admit:

The people in the old times were not as knacky as they are now. Isn't it true that they used to have the horse in a stall feeding him while the man would be out with a spade turning over the garden?

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm work. 888 Just as the rivalry between father and son in the farm family is most intimate and most constant in the economy which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community at large takes the same form and finds its expression within the frame of the work that the community must do to live. 578 561

Naturally enough, the young people do not express these attitudes. They do not agree with their elders on the score of their own shortcomings. But they have a good deal to say, among themselves, from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them, and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be sweepingly condemned with some such criticism as "old fool" and "old blatherer." Like the son already quoted who gave his father his head in farm work and listened patiently for orders, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations of themselves in which youth and strength outweigh age and wisdom.

But within a system of values in which the old represent the nexus of kinship and bear honor within the community, the young people do not see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the older men and women. The young people recognize themselves as forming a distinct group with interests and sentiments of its own, opposed in the scheme of rural life to the elders. They use the word "we" and oppose it to "them" for the old. They recognize places, pursuits, 578 561

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578 and forms of activity as their own and find much more interest in them than in those of the other group. The young men greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gathering of old men in something of the tone of derision which they reserve for women. But the rivalry in their sentiments between respect and egocentric feeling, like the controls imposed by their parents to keep them respectfully silent in the presence of their elders, imposes a silence upon them. Consequently, one cannot find among them the voluble expression of attitudes based upon one's belonging to a certain relative age. One must look for it rather in particular expressions of annoyance, boredom, and chafing against restraint.

Expressions of sentiment about age are the products of a system of values upon it in which the individual makes the valuation from the place he occupies. They express not only a grouping of individuals of similar age but a mutuality between groups so composed. And, too, they form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

561 Let us examine one instance at least of this categorization.
554 The community in rural Ireland bestows many names and
551 titles. They are ephemeral. They have no currency outside
888 the immediate circle of life in the townland or village. At best, they spread through a parish. They are nicknames and express no more than the individual's particular place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet some of them are generic epithets. Like "old" and "young," they may prefix a name and designate the more closely the personality of the person named. Like "boy" and "old fellow," they may express broad categories of a man's age and its associated behavior, and may designate not so much a biologic or physiognomic reality as a sociological status. The words "saint" and *cailleach* are of the last kind of epithet, in rural usage. In the brogue they refer only to the old. In strict philology

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both are metaphorical, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their "proper" meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, means properly "hag" or "witch." "Saint," of course, is the canonized saint of the church.

The small farmer who refers to this or that contemporary and neighbor as a "saint" or a *cailleach* is making a social and moral categorization. He is not concerned with purity of diction. The old man or woman, who follows a behavior proper to his or her status and is an ornament to the community, is a "saint." The old man or woman who does not is the object of distrust and dislike. His or her departures from accepted conduct cause disturbance and strife in the community. Accordingly, he or she is a *cailleach*. Thus, in one North Clare community a "stranger" whom the community disliked was a *cailleach*, despite the feminine gender of the word. Likewise, the old man who lived in harmony with his son upon a farm already transferred, a leader in the village whose oldest hale inhabitant he was, could be described by a neighbor as follows:

> The old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humor and, if he went to town to have a drink, he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as gentle and harmless as a child, and it will be a great loss to the village when he is gone. He and Roche [a neighbor] are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any farm advice, you can go to them and they will give you as good advice as you can get, because both of them have been successful farmers. It would pay a young man to listen to them.

"Saintliness" of this kind is a matter of one's filling one's role. But it is one's role for the village that counts. There is nothing individual in the canon of conduct. The young person who follows ardently the conventions laid down for him is not a "saint" even if he is exceedingly chaste and religious. It is the word "holy," not "saint," which comes

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561 554 551 888 to the countryman's lips in describing him. Nor is a young person a *cailleach*, for, like "saint," the term applies only to the old. Both terms refer to sociological age rather than chronological age, for those old people who occupy the role of "old" only because they have been forced into that position within the farm family can also be "saints." Thus the elder sister described in the discussion of farm marriage, who occupied the west room and the hob by the fire, was known in the neighborhood as a "saint."

Relative age makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values. And lastly, as in the description of "saint," it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

561 554 888 The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland wherever he meets countrymen of different ages together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of such broad age groups in terms of status.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellow, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons — those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great. In the community at large it is little less so. A farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat. His sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake house to honor the dead, the places by the fire go to the older men and women. The boys and girls must group themselves behind. They come forward only when called upon. At

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country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for Communion first. On the road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from "stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners; represent the interests of the community before priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to round out the picture.

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland.

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561 554 888 276 whiskey, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco, go to the elder men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe around among one's intimates and guests for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man. He must content himself with an occasional "fag." When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells:

> During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door, I said to her she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. "Let the young bucks go," said I; "they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly." She looked at me and says, "Frank, are you serious?" "I am, faith," says I; "call the old man back." He was just a few paces down the road. She did and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough.

561 554 888 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among the small farmers. Without them, the flavor of country life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the never-varying annual round of social activity in the country districts nor any inkling of the importance of those informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. It is here that social patterns of behavior upon age difference assume importance as controls of human activity. It is here that the roles the age grades play in the organization of the community reveal themselves most clearly.

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573 521 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 592 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the [582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 561 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 561 521 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between the old men's house and card playing in several of the young men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often silent or contented himself with answering questions. When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor, and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. As the evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own, one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the community. These seven are not the only old men in the community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother with a good farm across the lake on the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaird* house, and his faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man. Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

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own sex than otherwise, except in the house itself. Except upon ceremonial occasions in family life or in the considerable affluence of owning a gig or a trap or a motorcar, in Clare at least they go to mass, to town, or to sportive gatherings with companions of their own sex. Till recently and even now in remote districts, a conventional peasant woman always kept several paces behind her man, even if they were walking somewhere together.

The women do not go out on *cuaird* like the men. Their sphere of interest and influence is better confined within the family circle. Women do not take part directly in the deliberations of such cliques as that described in the old men's house at Rynamona. On the other hand, they are not in the least excluded or treated lightly or in a derogatory fashion. At the old men's *cuaird* the woman of the house is nearly always present. Her being of the company does not seem to stem the flow of talk in the slightest. She remains silent or is ignored so long as their talk deals with the world of the men's interest. But when the talk swings around to her sphere, she is consulted and is ready to take an active part.

The girls, of course, the unmarried younger women and adolescents, keep to themselves and form cliques and smaller groups of neighbors and kinswomen among themselves. Occasionally a dance breaks the ordinary succession of work and evening talk in the kitchen. And then, in their more restricted place, they are ready to go about under the tutelage of parent or brother to meet the young men and boys of the community.

All this is nothing new and has been described before. Yet one must review it, because in it one can see the existence of statuses of the kind we have demonstrated before. Old woman, married young woman, and girl, each term is a status in the countryside, in the same manner as in the cases of the boys and men we have already presented. The

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terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

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provinces often still today mark divisions among human beings that go back variously into remote past ages. A cleavage of the earth's face agreed upon long ago between forgotten clans can still persist in memory and influence conduct. The boundary of a parish, along which just the other day the countrymen fought hard-contested hurley-matches may once have marked an ancient kingdom's frontier. I mean, rather, that to understand the local past, one must first know the local present. Only then is it clear how such tradition moves and how it wields its force among men.

Therefore, I wish to devote this lecture to directing your attention inside such lines, to the behaviours which pattern local life inside them. We have already examined much of those that mark distinctions within the community, dividing it by 'blood' and by prestige. A good deal more could well be said of kinship and social stratification, were it not that we must hurry on. The existence of similar patterns which redirect integration across such distinctions is a new challenge.

One such pattern thrusts itself into notice immediately and insistently in rural Ireland. It clusters about age and age status. The conducts and sentiments round age are perhaps the most important factor, after familism, in shaping the countryman's way of life. Naturally, they are related to all that I have described before; they dovetail into family life. In them, the community

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561 finds its most compatible and its most enduring organization. No other social disposition sets a deeper stamp upon the countryman. No other is more immediate to the observer, tourist or anthropologist. No other, too, explains better why old custom lives today.

561 888 165 Ireland is in many ways an old person's country. Where emigration carries youth away, old age is disproportionately numerous. But that fact is not all the story, for the rural Irish are long-lived. The country districts set a norm for the Free State which shows itself statistically. Despite poverty, hardship, and the erroneously assumed 'decline of rural life', the countryman lives long and dies, often very old indeed. Many causes have been sought for this strange fact, but might it not be after all a simple matter? They live long because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honoured; they have power.

888 We remember that the household and the family centres itself in them. Their room is semi-sacred in the fairy-lore; it is the best in the house. The chair by the fire, the seat of honour and most comfort, is theirs. Even with the transfer of command up on the farm, they are objects of marked deference.

888 626 But this is more than a family matter. The old people have privilege among and receive respect from others than their own relatives. The conduct which bestows both upon them is as much the folk

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custom of the community as it is the habit of family life. Where necessary, the community can enforce its maintenance. The community can, as it were, invade the family and regulate its members through gossip, verbal censure, and more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest.

The countryman's vocabulary is full of allusions to values upon age. A great deal of the judgments and the comments he makes upon his surroundings express them. Naturally, they do not discuss the organization of behaviour upon age in explicit terms; for such conducts are 'natural' and unchangeable in the minds of those who are shaped by them. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. The upstart 'boy', the 'bold' child, the 'old man who ought to have shame for acting like that' are as constant objects of reproof and censure as the 'bad' father or son.

In general statements, one hears many expressions, day after day, which arise from the speaker's place within an age group. The broad opposition between 'old' and 'young' colours rural thinking powerfully. A great deal of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the 'friends' and neighbours who pass their lives within the rural community takes its form within this social context.

This is particularly true of discussion of the past. The past is a favourite topic; the 'old days' something of an obsession in the countryside. This

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521 888 561 is not only because one of the listeners was the anthropologist 'looking for old custom'. For, where descent is a critical nexus of habitual relationship and old age the most honoured state, the past cannot fail to be the focus of interest.

Thus the older men and women are very partial to the things of their own age. And the young people are, in part, swept along with them. The 'old times' are a very ready topic among the country-people. Many a time an old person will be got to tell of them; he or she takes little warming to the task. They were the hard times, even bad times, of famine and death but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. There were few tools, no draft-animals, no shoes, none of the amenities of present existence. The listeners murmur phrases of commiseration and shake their heads in pity. "Weren't they the bad old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" they ask one another. But there is a tinge of pride in their voices, in the manner of tellers and listeners alike.

For remembered necessities, in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale, are now feats of endurance to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young [481] man today to walk from Corofin to Ballinasloe, walk in his bare feet the forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who

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Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out through the bog mud to the famine road, before the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They become that universal complaint — the younger generation. "Young people aren't what they used to be," said one old farmer in the course of a general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. "Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle, and he putting them in small fields and late in the night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

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reflects their glories and serves as a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority. In the same spirit, the present can be measured against the past, usually only to be found lacking.

But these statements express much more than a mere rivalry between old and young. They spring from a mutuality between them which transcends rivalry. The old days are better among other things, because the interdependence of young and old was greater. The present is less attractive because the old no longer control the young, and the young no longer aid the old, as they should. Both facts of this interrelation may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he be old, may cast them in terms of mistrust and dislike for the young. In fact, the whole of experience may be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, here is one old fellow's rationalization of his misgivings about the present Irish school system:

"I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could—maybe for only three months in the year. But he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When a child finished school he would be expected to read a newspaper to the old people, and to write a letter for them, or to do sums. And he would do it well." His complaint is much longer

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but you have heard enough to see his mistrust of a system which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality between young and old.

This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the co-operation of all its members. No less the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that co-operation. General discussions among the country-people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate by quotation once more: two old fellows, adult farmers with families, could reach agreement upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

"The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little work they can do rather than how much. While the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work."

So they went on, but even in the midst of their theme they were forced to admit that there were compensations: "It is true for you that the people in the old times weren't as knacky as they are now. Wasn't it how they used to have the horse in a stall feeding, while they [themselves] would be out with a spade turning over the garden [and no plough]."

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm

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work. Just as the rivalry between father and son is most intimate and most constant in the economy which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community takes the same form.

You will probably ask if there are not grains of truth in the older generation's statements. My answer is that I neither know nor care. And I feel the countryman is not much more concerned. For this is a very old rivalry and once its expression was even more formalized than it is today. We owe the first poem of the eighteenth-century poet O'Rahilly to the expression of this rivalry, in an older day when Gaelic poetry still survived. He was called in to defend the young unmarried men, the 'boys' of today, in a poetic contest over respective merits between them and the 'old men', that is, the married men of family and substance. And he played, too, in the hurley game which fought out the contest in another field. For we are dealing here not so much with truths or falsities as with group-attitudes reciprocally held. Pareto would call them derivations; he would find their residues in the sentiments of those grouped together about a common status in the community. Once these sentiments were expressed ceremonially as in O'Rahilly's day. Even now the men of Luogh point out a large stone. With that stone the 'men' and the 'boys' competed at tests of strength till just a few years ago.

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For the young people do not agree with their elders on the score of their own shortcomings. They do not express these attitudes. They have a good deal to say, on the other hand, among themselves from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them; and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be swept aside with some such sweeping condemnation as 'old fool' and 'old blatherer'. Like the son I quoted in the last lecture, who listened patiently to his father, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations in which youth and strength outweigh age and ripe experience.

Yet within a system of values in which the old represent the nexus of kinship and bear honour within the community, the young people do not see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the old people. In the non-verbal behaviour of daily conduct, deference is uppermost. This fact sobers their group's egocentricity. In their position there is a necessary balance between subordination and compensatory vauntings and distastes. If you remember Synge's *Playboy*, you remember how reality broke in upon the playboy when the community saw his father still very much alive.

So, within this framework the young men can recognize themselves as a distinct group—an age grade, to use technical language. They have their

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561 888 own interests and sentiments, opposed in the scheme of rural life to those of their elders. Various places, pursuits and forms of activity are their own preserve. They greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gatherings of the old men with something of the derision they reserve for women. But the ambivalence of their attitudes makes general expression difficult. Their position imposes silence, except among themselves. Consequently, one finds their attitudes rather more frequently in particular annoyances, boredoms and chafings against restraint. Rural ceremony gives them few outlets today; the fine articulateness of O'Rahilly's day is either dammed or searches out more devious outlets.

The sentiments of both groups, then, are the products of a system of values about age status. The individual makes his statements and entertains his feelings by virtue of the place he occupies. These express not only a rough grouping of individuals of similar age and status but a rough interrelation between the groups so composed. They form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

551 888 One can trace this process in rural Ireland in the many names and epithets the local community bestows. Local titles are ephemeral; they have little currency outside the immediate circle of the townland and the village. At best they spread through a parish. They are nicknames, and express no more

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Relative age thus makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values, and lastly, it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland. One finds it wherever one meets the countrymen together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of the broad age groups.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellows, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons—those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great; in the community at large it is little less so. A farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat, his sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake-house to honour the dead, the places by the fire go to the old adult 'men' and 'women'; the 'boys and girls' must group themselves behind. They

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561 come forward only when called upon. At country 'stations' the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for communion first. On the road to shop, church or fair, the young man must keep pace, and the elder may call him to his side.

521 561 The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 'stopping on the road to pass the time of day'. In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form, in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must 'listen in'.

[203] At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the 'boys' are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

561 571 Then, secondly, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent

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the interests of the community, before priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel.

The relation extends in fact to very small matters indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco, go to the older men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe round among one's ~~intimates~~ and guests, for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man; he must content himself with an occasional 'fag'. When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells: "During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door I said to her—she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. Let the young bucks go, says I, they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly. She looked at me and says, Frank, are you serious? I am, faith, says

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561 down the road. She did, and his face lighted up and
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Informal as these differences are, they are never-
561 theless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct
517 among small farmers. Without them the flavour of rural life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the continual round of informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. For the country-people have their entertainments, like their more sophisticated urban contemporaries. The student of society cannot afford to dismiss them as inconsequential. They are often important controls of human activity.

When my colleagues and I first made our way into the rural communities we were to come to know best, we were plunged into a mass of observations which seemed to have no interpretation. Night after night, their day's work done, our new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, gambles, sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive gatherings were age-old customs like the bonfires of St. John's Eve; others celebrated crucial events, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occa-

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sional and less specialized gatherings; and others again wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and a dance round a gramophone.

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The personalities of the 'village' participated variously, different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the 'old fellows' went out on *cuaird*, as they called their visiting, to join one another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. As they phrased it "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*".

In most communities they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the 'Dáil'. Before the Free State, it had been the 'parliament'. The name is a jocular one, of course, but as we shall see, it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves, none the less.

The young men know the 'Dáil' as the 'old men's house'; they stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the matter most clearly, when he described the old men's gathering from its members' point of view:

"It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]," he said. "They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards; they talk about the

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561 next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they
577 know. It is a lot of codology [he means, nonsense,
573 buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, 'the public prosecutor', will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but when we get old and they get married, then they will gather just as we do and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over."

The statement, then, imparts a deeper reality to what appears at first sight to be merely a companionable pastime of the older men. This meeting of theirs is a clique, a tightly knit group of males of similar status and interests. It is strong enough and binding enough to bestow nicknames upon its members as in the case of the 'public prosecutor'. But it is a clique, too, which operates within a traditional setting. It has a function to perform for others than the cronies who make it up. The speaker claims for it at least that it prevented bad blood in the village.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows." Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron, the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenuously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim, but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or privately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quotations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements, handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather forecasters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu. Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be subdivided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother, who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until 40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the responsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve-

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case) in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

"Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6). In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 [221] [178] [571] [561] [562] Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 513 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] [562] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 561 [868] Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were between 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsibilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years. Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It